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CHAPTER III

troops were brought over to supply skilled makers of poison for the arrow tips used by the Manchu-Chinese army. After the suppression was completed, these Miao decided to or were left to settle in Hai-nan, and their descendants are to be found in a few small villages on Hainan.[66]

During the last 500 or 600 years since the Mongol Dynasty, the Miao have been subjected to two aggressive outside influences exerted by the Han-Chinese which have steadily reduced their numbers and restricted their territories. These were cultural assimilation on the one hand, and suppression and extermination on the other. There was hardly any time during the Ming and Ch'ing periods when suppression or pacification campaigns were not being undertaken against the Miao and the Yao. In the major suppression campaigns in the uprisings of 1698, 1732, 1794, and 1855, the Miao scattered in all directions, initiating the migratory movements of the modern period. (The Chin Ch'uan or Gold River uprisings concern the Fan and will be discussed in connection with the Lolo.) Moreover, these campaigns were prosecuted with even greater vigor than the "land development" programs of the T'ang and the Sung Dynasties. Each time, large armies penetrated deep into the Miao territories, first to slaughter and massacre, then to expel, and in sum, to exterminate. After seizing and occupying the lands of the Miao and Yao, Han-Chinese were brought in to settle and cultivate the fields. The expelled remnant that escaped extermination no longer found a spacious hinterland into which to escape, and had to make the best of it by collecting in the high hill lands. The result of succeeding centuries was the pushing of the Miao into a restricted area of mountain land considered of little value by Han-Chinese.[68] (The parallel situation with respect to the American treatment of the Indians is noteworthy.)

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The last great uprising of the Kuei-chou Miao was associated with a Mohammedan revolt in Yun-nan, when both Miao and Muslim took advantage of the beginning T'ai-p'ing Rebellion in China and of general discontent with Manchu rule to throw off the control of the central administration. The Miao and Muslim revolts were not coordinated events and were put down by Governor-General Lo Jao-tien of Yun-nan and Kuei-chou in 1853. The uprisings burst out anew the following year when the Miao plundered the Districts of T'ung-tzu and Jen-huai and en-

2: Wiens G-4 (no date) 1954 AF17 South China AF 17
Miao AE5

circled and besieged Ts'un-yi. In spite of the efforts of 20,000 Imperial troops under the command of the Kuei-chou Commandant, little progress against the Miao was made until Lo Jao-tien took personal command, driving them back to their strongholds in the Lei-t'ai Mountains.[69] The British officer Wingate, traveling from Hu-nan to Burma in the 1890's, describes the devastation suffered by the Han-Chinese towns from which they had not yet recovered even at that late period. He said: "At a place called Ching-chi on the Wu Ho [in Kuei-chou] is a town wall of some miles in circumference which once enclosed a prosperous town of several thousand families, but which now only contains a few officials' houses and a temple or two. It is one among many others which have suffered during the wars which the Chinese have had with the Miao or aborigines living in the hills south of the river."[70]

As pointed out in a preceding page, the suppressions of the last two centuries started a new period of migration for the modern Miao. The various tribes or clan groups feeling the pressure of encroaching Chinese agriculturalists in Kuei-chou, sought the higher secluded mountain fastnesses of surrounding provinces. The Black Miao gradually drifted to Hu-nan and Kuang-hsi. The Red Miao in the vicinity of T'ung-jen Hsien in eastern Kuei-chou migrated eastward to the three western Districts of Hu-nan. Some of the White Miao entered Ssu-ch'uan to their northwest. Tribes of the Hua Miao or Flowery Miao traveled westward through An-shun to the eastern part of Yun-nan, northward to Wu-ting District, and farther on to the north and south banks of the Chin-sha Chiang. Some of them also traveled southeastward through Yun-nan to the northern parts of Annam and Tongking. The Blue Miao scattered in many directions and are found now mostly in Hu-nan, Kuang-hsi, and Yun-nan. Many of these southwest provinces have representatives of different tribes of Miao. As far southwest as Ssu-mao in Yun-nan small groups of White, Blue, and Flowery Miao have penetrated. When the different groups of Miao live together in one locality, they soon tend to become much alike in cultural practices and dress, so that it is hard to distinguish members of one group from those of another.[71]

The above delineation of Miao history and migration brings us back to the consideration of the groups related to the Miao discussed in Chapter II, in particular the Fan, who developed in the southwestern periphery of China Prop-

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623 The assembly of all the arms-bearing men of a village /43/ is usually convoked by the village chief in all cases pertaining to the welfare of the village. Such cases are: the laying out of rice fields, the selection of a settlement site in the relocation of villages, communal hunts, and the like. The [666] [634] majority vote decides the issue. The popular assembly, however, may be convoked even against the will of the village chief if the villagers want to file a complaint against their village chief with the great chief. In this case the assembly convenes upon the initiative of the village elders.

634 The popular assembly of all arms-bearing men within the administrative district of a great chief had far greater power. It met only when needed; its decisions had to be unanimous. It was convoked by the great chief in order to pass resolutions about important matters. Such important [721] [796] matters were decisions about war and peace and measures to be taken to celebrate the festival of the New Year or the harvest festival. The resolutions passed by the popular assembly of the great chief were of an advisory nature, for the great chief was under no obligation to comply with them. Actually, of course, he avoided acting against the voice of his people. In one case, however, the great chief was absolutely bound to accept the decision of the popular assembly: when the latter [692] had decided on his removal. The great popular assembly was, at the same time, a court of appeal for verdicts of the great chief, and its decisions were regarded as irrevocable.

634 693 The expenses of a popular assembly had to be paid by the person who summoned it, hence either by the great chief himself or the party who had moved that it be convened. Among the expenses there were the provisions for all the assembly-participants at the place of the meeting, but no compensation was given for the journey to and fro. Moreover, in connection with minor cases, two chickens and plenty of alcohol were collected for the great chief and the elders; in connection with major affairs, one or more pigs.

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A 411 [283] [824] [415] cord is usually wound with a strip of bast in the center, because the most wear and tear is there. The arrows (Fig. 325), often poisoned at the tip, are made of bamboo throughout (Ill. 35)[2] and feathered with the same material. They are kept and carried around in quivers (Ill. 30[2] and Fig. 326) of wood or likewise bamboo.

The accuracy of the crossbow marksmen is considerable. I saw a little squirrel fall at the first shot at a distance of 20 A [224] meters. The penetrating power of the crossbow of the Akha is also very great. Stags and does are regularly killed even without poisoned arrows, and the Akha are able to slay even tigers with their crossbow, but they prefer to avoid these large cats. /Figs. 321-326 appear here./

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Chapter 20

Military Affairs and War

M 181 ● 721 The Meau are a warlike people who, at the risk of their lives and property, resist any subjugation and courageously face the enemy in defiance of death. Savina (1) describes them:

1. II, p. 232.

"Mild and timid in peace, they are wild and cruel in war."

M 648 M 701 [702] [562] In fact, it was only their infinitely superior greater strength of numbers that enabled the Chinese to subjugate the Meau. Every Meau who is able to carry a weapon is subject to military service, as well as boys as soon as they are able to handle the men's crossbow. Children and women, on the other hand, are excluded from active military service, though history has recorded instances of outstanding personal contributions in war by Meau women. Savina (1) /see footnote 1 above/ also mentions them: "Many a woman has become famous in war..."

1 [see cat 116, p270 - ANALYST]
2 [" " -p249- "]

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Military drills do not take place, for every Meau learns as a child how to handle weapons, which also help to secure food, and the technique of warfare is relatively simple in the primeval forest and the difficult mountainous terrain of the region inhabited by the Meau. On the other hand, in case of war, there follows a precise division of the army into districts, which are obliged to furnish riflemen, spear-bearers, and cross-bow archers, but no cavalry.

As soon as war threatens, every great chief (tsŭn kŏăn) (see the chapter, "Political Organization") appoints a supreme commander-in-chief (tă lĕn tĕŭ), under whom stand the superior leaders (ŏu lĕn tĕŭ), to whom in turn is assigned a number of subordinate leaders (lĕn tĕŭ). Each subordinate leader commands three officers (tsŏu fŭ), each of whom is in command of 60 to 100 men. All of the supreme commanders-in-chief for their part are under the king as the supreme war-lord.

Upon the order of the king, the army is called up by the tă lĕn tĕŭ, /395/ who send out messengers. Some Meau tribes seem to have also used signal drums (1). The rallying of the

1. Album Gotha, No. 81.

army followed within a few days or hours. As soon as the messenger has arrived, the warriors take up their weapons and adorn themselves with the white turban as the emblem of war. In the meantime, the women pack some dry food for them which will serve as traveling provisions for several days, and the warriors immediately hasten as quickly as possible to the places designated as assembly points by the tă lĕn tĕŭ. If the messengers did not mention any points of assembly, the men gather in the village of the respective superior leader (ŏu lĕn tĕŭ).

Every war is preceded by a formal declaration of war, to which the opponent replies in the same fashion. Among the Meau, the tă lĕn tĕŭ draw up the war plan. I could learn nothing about any special protection of the army while it is on the march. The army marches forward in small divisions in a broad front. This marching arrangement is in any case the

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726 most suitable in the difficult forested mountainous terrain inhabited by the Meau. In addition, an attempt is made to reach and occupy all the passes ahead of the opponent.

The war tactics of the Meau consist of surprise attacks from ambush, preferably during the night. At first only small sections of troops are sent out, while the numerically stronger reserves are held back. Single combats are unknown. If the
727 Meau are victorious, they chop off the head of every slain or
[634] captured opponent and send these trophies to their tsŭn kŏăn, the great chief, who pays money for them. Thus, there are no war trophies in the true sense. No harm is done to the women and children of the enemies; they are respectively married or adopted by the warriors. Enemy property, too, is not
[613] destroyed as a rule. The war booty is brought to the king, or
[634] lacking such a one, to the great chief for distribution among the warriors of his district.

726 Usually the battles are not as bloody as one might assume from the description. The fleeing enemy can soon escape his pursuers in the primeval forest, and the women and children immediately left their villages with /396/ all their movable property as soon as the spies reported the approach of enemy troops.

● 721 The purpose of war today among the Meau is exclusively to protect their own living space. Since as far back as the memory of man they have been in a defensive position in relation to their
[166] powerful neighbors, and since their constant migration southward is closely related to their search for such a safe living space, it is no longer possible to ascertain whether before that time other grounds for war were decisive. In any case the principle of only fighting tribal enemies prevails, whereas nothing is reported about wars between Meau tribes.

728 In the same way that an official declaration of war precedes the battles, war is also ended only by an appropriate ceremony. The opponents meet without weapons, eat a meal together, and declare that they want to be friends from now on. The Meau are also familiar with the truce, however, which

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181 In the literature the character of the Meau is judged
648 very differently. They come out the worst in the Chinese sources, which is understandable if one considers the fact that in four thousand years of struggles the Meau have not yet been completely subjugated and assimilated. Thus, the oldest part of the Schu-djin, which supplements the Bamboo Annals, characterizes them as follows: "These Meau are really stupid, silly, conceited, and without respect! Insolent and stubborn, they do not walk the path of righteousness and they destroy virtue!..."

181 The authors of other nationalities, however, especially
674 Europeans, come to totally different conclusions, and many authors stress above all, besides many other good qualities, the honesty of the Meau. Thus, Savina (1) emphasizes: "Theft is

1. II, p. 232.

extremely rare." Since not all of the peoples neighboring the Meau can boast of such honesty, the members of these peoples positively search for an explanation of this, to them, very inexplicable phenomenon, and /460/ Dhuraratsadorn (1) writes

1. Page 170.

that the Meau have, "as a result of a strange character trait," an aversion to petty thefts." If they "wished to steal, this had to be done on a large scale. Forming bands /Platten/ and companies, they pillaged and, if necessary, did not shrink from murder." Actually, however, the "pillaging expeditions" [921] assumed by the author were a matter of war actions in the eyes of the Meau and had nothing at all to do with crime!

181 Marabail (2) gives the following characterization: "The

2, Page 463.

[191] Meau is likable, honest, industrious, warlike, and intelligent. He learns foreign languages quickly." I, too, was often able